

Presentation skills help women advance their careers

Women in the workplace sometimes find it difficult to get the recognition and promotions they deserve.

While women make up almost half of the workplace, they still earn 80 percent of what men make, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

There is a crucial skill women can learn to help them stand out from their peers: dynamic delivery.

Each time a woman begins to speak, she has an opportunity to either grab positive attention or lose her competitive edge. Women need dynamic delivery skills in order to catapult themselves above their peers and make it difficult to discriminate against them. Without this skill, highly-competent women can remain submerged in the general employee pool.

During my 25 years of studying women in the workplace and how they can best achieve their professional goals, I've developed these "three Cs" to become great motivational speakers:

Command Attention - If a woman doesn't gain audience attention at the beginning of a presentation, she's lost her audience before the first Pow-



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er Point slide is advanced. Vary your vocal pitch so there is a roller-coaster effect when you speak. If you are dynamic all of the time, you're dynamic none of the time.

Use questions, quotes or props to wake up your audience. Vow that "Good Morning" will never be your opening line again.

Command Memory - People relate to stories, but most stories are too long and fail to make the point. Learn to tell a story concisely and effectively so the lessons are apparent to the listener.

Immerse your audience into the story by using sensory description: when people see, hear and feel the experience, you create a compelling story.

Command Action - People make decisions based on their own needs, wants and beliefs. Count the amount of times you use "I" in a presentation. Without a "you" focus, people tend not to listen.

Speech coaches know that audience involvement in an

activity of some kind makes presentations memorable - and the desire to act rises from 10 to 90 percent.

Pauline Frederick, an American star and film actress from the 1920s, said, "When a man gets up to speak, people listen, then look. When a woman gets up, people look, and if they like what they see, they listen." That's as true today as it was almost 100 years ago.

Women who succeed in the workplace work hard, dress professionally and get along well with others. But those who present themselves positively in public - whether it's in a one-on-one meeting, a board meeting, or presenting to an audience of 1,000 - are provided with an express pass to promotion and career success.

I'll host an in-depth seminar for women in business titled "High-Heeled Success Steps for Dynamic Delivery" from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at the Crowne Plaza Cincinnati in Blue Ash.

Kay Fittes is CEO of High-Heeled Success, a women's coaching and career consultancy she founded and leads. You can reach Fittes at www.highheeledsuccess.com or call 561-4288.